THE

AERONAUT.

No. 83. August 8. 1817.

——————nec saevior ulla

Pestis ——————————————

— VIRG.

A fiercer plague ne'er rag'd in mortal breast.

ANON.

To the Editors of the Aeronaut.

Gentlemen,

The French have in their language a word, which none of our grammarians, however strange it may seem, have ever been able to translate to the satisfaction of

an English reader.

Ennui, unless I can do something in addition to what has already been done, must remain unknown among us; or, at any rate, be accounted a sensation, which we can feel, but cannot define, which we know ourselves, but cannot express to others. But whence, in the name of reason, arises all this ambiguity? A merchant can tell of his losses, a soldier can relate his dangers, and a patient can describe his pains. This done, and the difficulty vanishes. Surely we may analyze what we experience so often; and proclaim abroad, what are the circumstances that attend it, what the effects of its visitation. I will then try and give a solution of the problem, for once in my life; and, accordingly, pronounce ennui, to be the feeling of a sailor, when landed after a voyage, the dissatisfaction of a soldier, when he has retired from business, the weariness of a soldier, when off the field of battle, and the in-

patience of a student, in the pastime of a vacation.

I might, besides these, four instances, bring up many others, if it would answer any end; but I forbear, because enumeration is useless. Each of these I have mentioned, will tell you his feeling, because it oppresses him so strongly; his disgust with what he is, his fondness for what he was; his anxiety for employment, and his loathing of ease. It is impossible to be happy, in a sudden transition from labor to idleness, from the attentive pursuit of an object, to a total absence of care.

The thing we are talking of, easily comes, but is not easily eradicated. The dread of it, therefore, makes our citizens very careful, how they suffer it to gain ground. I can assure you, that a many an industrious laborer, a rich farmer, and a wealthy tailor, still pursue their trades with the same original ardor with which they commenced them, merely because, after twenty years

of work, they could not pass an hour without something to do. On this account, they prefer bodily drudgery to mental fatigue. While they are at duty, their stock is increasing; while at leisure they are making no additions. The former is a positive good; & the latter, with them, is not an entire absence of evil..

In my opinion, gentlemen, we are most liable to the attacks of this unknown daemon, at the present season of the year, when excessive heat relaxes every power of the body, and weakens every faculty of the mind. The general lassitude, which appears so much to overcome the whole round of our circle of friends, is an argument, how little calculated are the closeness of our air, & the narrowness of our streets, to infuse into the soul that vivacity, which is the light of the frame, and the ministering attendant of genius. Every body seems to consider, how they may best go out of their houses in the mor-

ning, discharge their business, and return home, with the least injury from an impure atmosphere, and a burning sun.

But why not seek a remedy for so troublesome a disorder? why not, by changing the scene, altering the pursuits, and unbending the thoughts, turn off that tedium which is so unpleasant to our feelings, and inspire that hilarity which we so much desire? Lures have indeed been sought for, but none have ever been found. The cit, as he wanders in listless indolence, weary with the hours as they go by, and hankering after some new object of attention, fills his head with imaginations of liveliness & mirth, sprightliness & ease, when he shall choose to relinquish the confined station of town-employment, and look for temporary abandonment, in country pleasures, and rural sports, - in the cottage, removed from the bustle of life, and enjoying the fragrance

of a pure breeze. But, when the thing which he has anticipated with delight, arrives within his reach, the fair illusions which have so long dazzled his sight, vanish into nothing; every gale sounds monotonous to his ear, the warbling of the birds is tedious because repeated, and the charms of novelty, in time, lose their beauty, because wrinkled by age. Tranquillity becomes irksome, and relapses into langour; ease is tiresome, and degenerates into sluggishness. He flies to business in his own defence; grows tired of business, and runs again into the country; while, in no scene, and no situation, can he find himself in the possession of such a condition, as will preserve him, from the gloom of solitary repining, and the murmurings of useless discontent.

There are so many cases daily exhibited before our eyes, of men at death's door, from not knowing what to do with them-

selves, that to particularize would be needless. But there is a class of people in our city of New-York, who seem to be particularly afflicted with the disorder, and who catch the dire contagion from each other with inconceivable rapidity. Their countenances are really pitiable; and I am quite at a loss to know, what they most resemble. They appear to have a perfect hatred with themselves; and unite in their faces, the anguish of inevitable despair, and the distraction of hopeless love; while they are tormented with neither of these feelings. They are merely weary with thinking for something to do, and with the continuance of doing nothing.

Will Saunter is the only son of an enormously rich trader, and a very silly mother. When he had completed, at six different schools, a course of study sufficient to enable him to go to

college, he entered. But, alas! too tender to bear the fatigue of an hour's study in an evening, by way of preparing for the duties of the morrow, too delicate for reproof, & too modest for display, my youthful scholar was removed from a place, too arduous for his infant powers, too severe for his unparalleled sensibility. The wintry blast blew too roughly on his visage; and to be on his classic post, at nine o'clock in the morning, was anticipated by his anxious father, and terrified mother, as the ruin of his hopes, & the destruction of his future glory. He was nurtured at home, till judged big enough to take care of himself; instructed in the rules of modern politeness, and taught the most scrupulous forms of fashionable etiquette. Armed & equipped, he sallied forth for

conquest; and, tho' no beauty, to begin with, bandy-legged, and of a sallow complexion; and besides that, without sense to discriminate between right & wrong, and judgment to preserve him from daily blunders, he ventured to predict, on his outset, that none would outstrip him, in case of department, elegance of address, or liveliness in conversation.

His great desire being to become a beau, will made it a matter of course to appear precisely at twelve o'clock at the steps of the City Hotel, to await the coming of the fair, decked in the bloom of beauty, & smiling with roses, either native or borrowed. He walked, till his appetite called him to more substantial employment; and in sleep, gambling, riding, and dancing, consumed the

remainder of a day, commenced in folly, and wasted in sin.-

This course of conduct he pursued, till satiety cloyed his senses, and warned him to desist. But how was he, by changing his life, to increase his happiness? He knew nothing, but it was too late to mend; and habits, long neglected could not be assumed. He endeavors still to preserve in what he once enjoyed; but he cannot reap that pleasure which he formerly would feel. He passes his days, in trying how he can occupy his hours with trifles, but cannot, in all his endeavors, prevent <u>ennui</u>.

In rainy weather, <u>Will</u> is deplorably at a loss. He tries to sleep: but, as night is the season when

men refresh themselves from labor, by calling to their aid the "sweet restorer", he cannot prolong his slumbers beyond the limit prescribed to their enjoyment. He never buys a book; and, if he did, he would not understand it; this resource is therefore denied to him. He flies, as a last refuge, to the embraces of the bottle;- but, as he is not very lively, and is weak in understanding, wine, instead of exhilarating his spirits, gives him a headache. In solemn formality, he now tells me the melancholy story of his ills; that, within doors or without, in company or in solitude, free from liquor, or muddy with drink, he can by no means make himself what he wish-

as he could be.

I must confess, tho' I am sometimes at a loss, I never am in such a plight. I can read when I am alone, and I can enjoy companionship. Perhaps I was brought up better than my unfortunate friend. Be it so;- but we see the result. It is most likely, that an occasional application of the rod, instead of continual indulgence in folly, would have rid WILL of personal inconvenience, and the city of a public nuisance;- and that such had been the case, is the sincere wish of,

Your's, &c

CALEB WATCHFUL.

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